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UNMIS

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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN/ AMIS-UN Transition

International community and Government of North Darfur form joint coordination committee

(*AlRai AlAam/ Akhbar Alyaum* – 27th Apr. **el-Fasher**) A meeting between the Governor of North Darfur, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Sudan Jan Pronk and AU Commissioner Babagana Kingibe held in el-Fasher yesterday concluded in agreement to form a joint committee to coordinate humanitarian and health issues.

The Governor reiterated government commitments to all agreements signed with the rebel forces of Darfur and commended the AU and the UN for their cooperation with the government in realising security and stability in the region.

On his part, SRSR Jan Pronk said the presence of Vice-President Taha in the talks in Abuja will contribute to bolstering the talks. He confirmed UN support for the realisation of peace in Darfur through the Abuja talks and said the UN has launched studies on development projects in North Darfur.

SRSR Pronk also visited AMIS headquarters in el-Fasher where he held talks with AMIS representatives.

On the other hand and in a meeting SRSR Pronk held with members of the government and the security committee of North Darfur State, Mr. Pronk lauded the efforts for tribal reconciliation in the area and expressed pleasure over the level of security in the state.

The Governor of North Darfur on his part called upon the international community to put more efforts to bolster the peace talks in Abuja.

SRSR says the situation on the ground does not help in reaching a peace deal in Abuja

(*AlHayat* – 27th Apr. **el-Fasher**) The Governor of North Darfur says he held talks yesterday with SRSR Jan Pronk who expressed doubts that the parties to the Abuja talks will reach a peace deal by the date set by the mediators.

Governor Osman Mohamed Yusif Kibir said that the SRSR said he was not optimistic because the situation on the ground and the violations by the armed movements complicate the issues and will thus reflect negatively on the Abuja process.

The governor added that the SRSR promised to provide much assistance should the parties reach a peace deal as soon as possible and called on the parties to the Abuja talks to double their efforts for a peaceful end to the conflict.

The governor, on the other hand, described the recent Security Council resolution on sanctions on Sudanese as inappropriate and untimely. He said the Sudan government is ready to reach a just peace deal as soon as possible should the rebels give more concessions.

He described the security situation in the state as stable.

Sudan denounces "unfortunate and ill-timed" UN sanctions

(*ST* - 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) Sudan denounced Wednesday the UN Security Council decision to slap sanctions on four Sudanese officials blamed for bloodshed and human rights abuses in war-torn Darfur as "unfortunate and ill-timed."

It was a "negative message" that could undermine African Union-sponsored efforts to bring an end to the conflict that has left up to 300,000 people dead and over two million displaced, the official SUNA news agency quoted foreign ministry spokesman Jamal Ibrahim as saying.

"The efforts currently being exerted in Abuja have neared their end and what is needed now is support and not the use of the stick and negative statements," Ibrahim said after Tuesday's vote in the Security Council.

"This resolution demonstrates that the Security Council is serious in its efforts to restore peace and security in the region and, far from interfering in the peace process in Abuja, it will strengthen that process," said US ambassador to the UN John Bolton, whose country drafted the resolution.

Malnutrition rising in Darfur as fighting increases - UN

(*AP/ST* - 26th Apr. **Geneva**) — Malnutrition is on the rise again in Darfur, where more fighting and less money are eroding progress, the U.N. children's fund said Wednesday.

"We need to raise the alarm bell," said Ted Chaiban, head of UNICEF's mission to Sudan. "We're losing ground. We need to stop this deterioration.

"We are seeing the beginning of what could be a reverse of the positive trend of 2005."

Fighting between the government, its allies and the rebel movements, infighting among rebel factions jockeying for position and territory, as well as general banditry - individuals hijacking trucks, looting food, supplies and equipment - have forced a new wave of people from their homes, Chaiban said.

Unrest is also preventing access to roughly a third of all those who have been forced from their homes but remain within Sudan, and are therefore not officially classified as refugees because they haven't crossed an international border.

"And there is the added element of lack of funding despite the fact this is seen and said to be a top priority for most donors," said Chaiban, who said UNICEF has only received \$15 million of the \$89 million it appealed for in Darfur for 2006.

An additional 200,000 people have fled their homes to escape the violence over the last three months alone, putting the number of internally displaced people in Darfur at over 2 million, he said. Another 200,000 refugees are in Chad.

"In any other place that would have been front page news," Chaiban said. "In Darfur, because there were already 1.85 million displaced people and because we've been at it for three years, it doesn't register on the Richter scale."

After huge humanitarian efforts decreased the rate of global acute malnutrition from 21.8% in 2004 to 11.9% in 2005, the number has risen again to 15% in South Darfur, he said.

"It's starting to creep up again," Chaiban said. "We're seeing some trends that we have to watch and make sure don't confirm themselves."

UNICEF only has enough funds to sustain operations until early June.

"That means real activities that help real children are not continued," Chaiban said.

UNICEF has already cut back or suspended funding for education, maternal and child nutrition, primary health care, and extending water systems to rural communities.

"What is clearly needed is a force on the ground that has the person power, the mandate and the logistical back up to be able to make a difference," Chaiban concluded.

More than 100,000 Sudanese children under 5 died last year from malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections, UNICEF said.

Tuesday, AU mediators presented their first comprehensive draft agreement to the warring Darfur parties, whose representatives have been engaged in peace negotiations in Nigeria. The AU has set Sunday as a deadline for an agreement. Seven previous rounds of talks have failed to stem the fighting.

US expected to push for bigger NATO role in Darfur

(AP/ST – 26th Apr. Sofia, Bulgaria) U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is expected to push NATO allies this week to accept a more robust role for the alliance helping African peacekeepers end political and ethnic strife in Sudan's Darfur region.

Darfur is expected to be a major topic at a meeting of NATO foreign ministers Thursday and Friday in the Bulgarian capital, along with the dangers facing allied troops as they expand their mission in Afghanistan and the intensifying nuclear standoff between Iran and the West.

Iran wasn't on NATO's official agenda, but is expected to dominate an informal dinner Thursday evening where ministers representing the 32 nations of NATO and the European Union are scheduled to hold free-ranging talks on world affairs.

Wednesday, Rice said that Washington was concerned over Iranian threats to share the nuclear technology it is developing with other countries.

Rice was in Turkey on a weeklong trip to Europe that started in Greece. Early Wednesday, she departed Turkey for a surprise visit to Iraq. She was expected to visit Sofia, Bulgaria, after the Iraq visit, the U.S. Embassy said.

Rice was likely to seek common ground with allies before Friday's U.N. Security Council deadline for Iran to suspend uranium enrichment, a process that can produce fuel for nuclear reactors or material for warheads.

Western officials have warned Tehran that failure to comply could lead to sanctions, but they faced opposition from permanent Security Council members China and Russia. It was

unclear what the next steps of the U.S. and European allies will be. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is due to join the NATO talks Friday.

On Darfur, Washington has been urging NATO to step up its support for African Union peacekeepers, which so far has been limited to airlifts and a small training mission for African Union commanders.

The 6,000 strong African Union force has failed to halt political and ethnic violence, which has killed more than 180,000 people and driven more than three million from their homes.

The U.S. wants NATO to provide the Africans with logistics, communications, transport, planning, intelligence and expanded training - including an unspecified number of instructors and other experts on the ground in Sudan.

NATO has offered to do more, but several allies fear sending significant numbers of Europeans and North Americans could inflame regional sensitivities - particularly if the mainly Muslim Sudanese government opposes a NATO deployment.

Osama bin Laden accused the U.S., in a tape aired Sunday, of igniting strife in Darfur "to pave the way for sending Crusader forces to occupy the region and steal its oil under the pretext of peacekeeping. It is a continuing Crusader-Zionist war against Muslims."

Any final decision on NATO's role is expected to come only after complex negotiations involving the Sudanese government, the U.N., the African Union and the 26 NATO members.

The Sofia meeting is also expected to discuss proposals for NATO to develop closer ties other democracies including Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea to coordinate political positions and peacekeeping operations.

The ministers will also review efforts by Ukraine, Georgia, Croatia, Albania and Macedonia to join the alliance. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer Tuesday said NATO leaders would "send a signal" on the countries' membership aspirations at a summit in November, but a final decision was unlikely before 2008.

CPA

Press Briefing of the CJMC at UNMIS Headquarters

ACCUSATIONS AND COUNTER ACCUSATIONS

(The local press – 27th Apr. **Khartoum**) A press conference of the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee saw the SAF and SPLA representatives trade in accusations of violations of the Security Arrangements stipulated in the CPA.

Brg. Gen. Marc Paul of the SPLA said the SAF refused to hand over to the SPLA an SPLA intelligence officer who shifted to the SAF and pointed out that this is a violation of the CPA that states no such defections would be acceptable after 9th January this year.

SAF representative to the CJMC, Brg. Gen. Hussein Ali Kambal, countered by saying that the SPLA has also rejected a SAF request to be handed over members of a PDF force in Kurmuk who ran off to the SPLA after breaking into an ammunition store in Dindiro, Blue

Nile State. Referring to the officer the SPLA claims had run away from their ranks, the SAF representative said that the officer may be handed over to the SPLA should it be proved that he had run away from the SPLA.

Brg. Gen. Marc Paul then accused the SAF and armed groups aligned to it of involvement in the recent incident in Abyei and demanded that the culprits be brought to the book.

Brg. Gen. Kambal said that the SAF has formed a commission of inquiry into the incident and will bring to account any person found responsible for the attack.

On the Lord's Resistance Army, Kambal refuted SPLM/A accusations that SAF elements were still supporting the Lord's Resistance Army. He pointed out that most Lord's Resistance Army attacks are launched from within SPLA areas. He wondered how the SAF could support the Lord's Resistance Army when the latter launches its operations from within SPLA areas and challenged critics to bring forth evidence of such SAF support to the Lord's Resistance Army.

Despite conceding that implementation remains a difficult task, the military representatives of the parties to the CPA and the UN Force Commander assured that the CPA is still firmly on track.

FORCE COMMANDER SAYS THE BIN LADEN THREAT CONCERNS ALL IN SUDAN

CJMC chairman and UN Force Commander Lt. Gen. Jasbir Singh Lidder told the joint press briefing yesterday that the parties to the CPA have illustrated clear commitments towards the Security Arrangements and that this has had a positive impact.

He underlined the need for the SAF and the SPLA to complete the creation of the JIUs and move their forces to the assembly points.

On eastern Sudan, the Force Commander said the UN is concerned about the security situation in eastern Sudan. He said a political solution must be reached for the crisis ahead of the a full withdrawal of the SPLA to avert the occurrence of a security gap with the increase in tone of the threats by the Eastern Front.

On the recent Bin Laden threat to the deployment of international forces to Darfur, the Force Commander said that the threats do not only concern the UN but all other parties in the Sudan. He said that as the UN Force Commander in Sudan, he is taking these threats seriously and at face value.

He said the UN will cooperate with the Sudan government on Darfur.

During the CJMC press briefing yesterday the SAF and SPLA exchanged accusations of violations turning the press conference into a battlefield of words and Force Commander Lt. Gen. Jasbir Singh Lidder had to come in to concede there are difficulties being faced in the implementation of the CPA. He pointed out that there is a looming conflict in Terekeka, Pibor and Abyei but assured the press that these difficulties can be resolved through more confidence between the two parties.

The Force Commander called upon the two sides to look at the possible aspects.

ON REDEPLOYMENT

The SAF announced it has completed the first and second phases of redeployment of its forces north of the 1.1.'56 line by more than 100% at the timeline set by the CPA.

Brg. Gen. Kambal assured the press yesterday that the SAF is on course to meet the July 2007 timeline set by the CPA to complete its full redeployment north of that line and criticised the delay in the redeployment of the SPLA from eastern Sudan.

On the Abyei incident, Kambal pointed out that the SSDF was moving at night and without having informed the UN and that "in military terms, movement at night has its own implications".

He said however that investigations into the issue is ongoing and that the SAF rejected a UN involvement in the investigations because they feel it is an issue that concerns the SAF and that the SAF will bring the culprits to book once investigations are complete.

Brg. Gen. Marc Paul (SPLA) said the SPLA is committed to the implementation of its part in the CPA and has started redeploying from eastern Sudan.

He said armed groups not aligned to either of the forces (SAF or SPLA) constitute a source of concern to the SPLA and shall be regarded as renegades by the GoSS.

It says redeployment from eastern Sudan will take place in three phases ending by next June.

The SPLA officer said those responsible for the attacks on the convoy in Abyei must be brought to book.

On the Lord's Resistance Army, Brg. Gen. Paul said that the Lord's Resistance Army should be regarded as an enemy to the people of Sudan.

Aweil IDPs 'forced' to return

(*The Juba Post* – 27th Apr. **Khartoum**) The governor of North Bahr-el-Ghazal State says the destruction by police of IDP camps in Khartoum and forced evacuations has induced 3,909 IDPs to risk the long trek back to Aweil.

The governor had accompanied a group of IDPs travelling on truck from Khartoum to Aweil.

The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission is registering the IDPs while the WFP is feeding those who had come as far as Aweil.

A total of 3,909 have been registered and supplied with food, including those in transit to other countries.

1,914 of those in transit were completely stranded and local partners were appealing to the international community to assist in hiring trucks for the returns before the rains set in.

Activists blame donors, neighbours for Somalia, Sudan

(*Reuters/ST* - 26th Apr. **Nairobi**) Conflicts in Sudan and Somalia are raging on because donors and regional mediators have failed to implement peace agreements for the two war-ravaged countries, peace activists said on Wednesday.

Researchers, civil society members and educationists from the Horn of Africa urged donors and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to continue with efforts to end conflicts in Sudan and Somalia.

"We are ... perturbed with the manner in which the implementations of these peace agreements are seriously slowed." said a statement issued by the activists in Kenyan capital Nairobi after a three-day seminar. IGAD mediated talks in Kenya between southern Sudan rebels and the government of Sudan which culminated with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005.

The regional mediation body was also instrumental in bringing together warring Somali factions for talks that gave birth to the Somali Transitional Federal Government in October 2004 in Nairobi.

Donors funded both the Somali and Sudan Peace Processes.

However IGAD and the donors have since neglected Sudan and Somalia raising fears of more conflicts in the two Africa nations, the peace activists said.

"There was a slackening, after the agreements were signed then people relaxed." Robert Mudida, a lecturer at the University of Nairobi school of Diplomacy and International Studies said. "That peace need to be nurtured its not just going to take care of itself."

The activists said lack of United Nations monitoring in Sudan was also to blame. The activists said resources that fuel conflicts in the conflict-prone Horn of Africa could instead be used to search for peace.

"We use millions and billions of dollars to purchase armaments," said Yacob Tesfai, a senior researcher at Life and Peace Institute which organised the seminar. "The challenge is to use these resources used in conflict for peace."

GoNU

Iran, Sudan sign cooperation protocol

(*ST* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) Sudan and Iran today signed in Tehran special documents on joint cooperation between the two countries. The ceremony was attended by President Omar al-Bashir and his Iranian counterpart, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The Sudanese foreign minister signed on behalf of the Sudanese government while the Iranian foreign minister, Manuchehr Mottaki, signed on behalf of the Iran government.

The head of political department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Abd-al-Hafidh Ibrahim, said the minutes of the signing ceremony included exchanging of views between the two countries on issues of mutual interest.

Speaking to Radio Omdurman, Ambassador Ibrahim said that Iran had assured of its support and solidarity with Sudan in facing challenges regarding the Darfur issue and would support the remaining AU troops in the region as well as its keenness on revitalizing the agreements which it signed with Sudan, particularly the economic and trade agreements.

The ambassador further said that Sudan has declared its support for Iran's right to possess a nuclear programme for its security.

Sudanese president appoints 16 SPLM's ambassadors

(*ST* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir appointed sixteen ambassadors from Southern Sudan. The list of the nominated was proposed by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) as stipulated in the comprehensive peace agreement signed on 9 January 2005.

The Foreign Minister, Lam Akol Ajaween confirmed on yesterday that the President al-Bashir has approved the SPLM's nomination of sixteen Southern Sudanese ambassadors as stipulated in the power sharing portfolios of the CPA.

Akol said the appointment of the new ambassadors from Southern Sudan was in line with article 2.6.2 in order to create a sense of national belonging and address imbalances.

He said a National Civil Service Commission shall be established with the task of formulating policies for training and recruitment into the civil service that targets between twenty to thirty percent of the positions.

This is the first time that good number of Southern Sudanese are getting the positions of Ambassadors. The countries they will serve in as heads of Diplomatic Mission representing the Government of Southern Sudan are yet to be announced soon.

Lam did not mention to which countries the new ambassadors are appointed.

SPLM ambassadors, will soon go to Khartoum to be sworn in. Most of them are based in the USA.

Darfur/ Abuja talks/ Chad

Groups attack UN Land Cruiser in Darfur

(*Juba Post* – 27th Apr. **Khartoum**) A group of bandits attacked a UN Land Cruiser in the Sag al-Na'am area of North Darfur State last week.

According to the police information officer, a UNMIS medical assistant informed the police that a group of people attacked the vehicle as it was travelling from el-Fasher to Omdurman.

The perpetrators escaped with the car and an estimated 2.5 million SD. Worth of UN property.

The police say these bandits may belong to the 'rebels'.

US wants sanctions on anyone responsible for Darfur War Crimes

(*AP/ST* – 26th Apr. **Washington**) The United States will seek more U.N. sanctions against individuals responsible for war crimes against the people of Darfur, the State Department said Wednesday.

Spokesman Adam Ereli said criteria for being on a list is evidence that implicates a person in war crimes that would hold up in court when challenged.

"Regarding future designations, we will act upon the evidence that is available," Ereli said. "We will follow that evidence where it leads, and when it is firm and conclusive we will take action. So it does not rule out further sanctions."

The U.N. Security Council voted Tuesday to impose sanctions on four men _ a Sudanese air force officer and three other Sudanese nationals _ for their involvement in the Darfur conflict, the first such penalties imposed in the violence that the United States has described as genocide.

The four who face sanctions are accused of helping orchestrate and carry out killings, rape and other human rights abuses in the western Sudan region.

"There are other names being looked at by the experts, by the sanctions committee," Ereli said.

He said it was a "gross oversimplification" to say, as some human rights groups did, that the United States was opposed to putting four additional people on Tuesday's list because they were needed as allies in the war on terror.

He said as far as he knew the United states removed no any names from a longer list.

"The criteria for being on the list is, do you have evidence that can hold up in court when challenged that implicates these people in crimes," Ereli said. "And these four individuals are on the list; the evidence was that good, and the information was that firm."

He said that it took 13 months to get sanctions on four people shows how committed the United States is to seeing justice done.

"And having devoted this level of effort and diplomatic muscle, we're not about to let up," Ereli said.

He also welcomed a comprehensive draft of a peace agreement between the rebels in Darfur and the Sudanese government put forward by the African Union mediator at peace talks in Abuja, Nigeria.

"This is an important and welcome step in our collective efforts to bring peace to that conflict," Ereli said. "For the first time in one document there is a proposed solution to all the issues: wealth-sharing, power-sharing and security."